

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COMMISSION**  
**SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA**  
**April 19, 2021**  
**7:00 PM**  
**VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**MEETING ID: 655 079 760**

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Pierre Boutros, Mayor

**II. ROLL CALL**

Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

The City of Birmingham welcomes public comment limited at the Mayor's discretion to allow for an efficient meeting. The Commission will not participate in a question and answer session and will take no action on any item not appearing on the posted agenda. The public can also speak to agenda items as they occur when the presiding officer opens the floor to the public. When recognized by the presiding officer, state your name for the record, and direct all comments or questions to the presiding officer.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Direction from Review of the First Draft of the 2040 Plan
  - a. Resolution to direct the DPZ team to prepare the second draft of the 2040 Plan, and to include the Planning Board's recommendations for changes as outlined in the letter from DPZ dated April 13, 2021.

**V. ADJOURN**

*NOTICE: Individuals requiring accommodations, such as mobility, visual, hearing, interpreter or other assistance, for effective participation in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at (248) 530-1880 (voice), or (248) 644-5115 (TDD) at least one day in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.*

*Las personas que requieren alojamiento, tales como servicios de interpretación, la participación efectiva en esta reunión deben ponerse en contacto con la Oficina del Secretario Municipal al [\(248\) 530-1880](tel:2485301880) por lo menos el día antes de la reunión pública. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).*



## MEMORANDUM

Planning Division

**DATE:** April 13, 2021

**TO:** Thomas Markus, City Manager

**FROM:** Jana Ecker, Planning Director

**SUBJECT:** Direction from Review of First Draft of the 2040 Plan

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As the City has now completed a detailed review of the first draft of the 2040 Plan to solicit public input, the DPZ team prepared a summary of the public input received, and the recommendations for changes to the first draft expressed by Planning Board members to date.

At the Planning Board meeting on March 10, 2021, the Planning Board reviewed the recommendations for changes discussed through the review of the first draft of the 2040 Plan. Please find attached a summary letter of these recommendations, which has been updated with the direction received by the Planning Board on March 10, 2021.

At the City Commission meeting on March 22, 2021, the City Commission was asked to review the recommendations for changes discussed during the review of the first draft and the direction of the Planning Board to include these changes in the second draft of the 2040 Plan, and to provide comment. The City Commission requested additional information on the extent of public comment on various issues, as well as more information on the source of the recommendations for changes, and the balance of public opinion for and against the recommendations.

Accordingly, please find attached the previous March 15, 2021 memo from DPZ, as well as a new memo dated April 13, 2021 containing additional details from the consulting team on the public comments received and the recommendations outlined for changes to the made in the second draft of the 2040 Plan.

After the City Commission has reviewed the recommendations for changes and provided input, the DPZ team will prepare the second draft of the 2040 Plan, to be provided to the City in June 2021. The remaining steps in the master plan updating process will then include the review of the second draft of the 2040 Plan and the completion and review of a final draft of the 2040 Plan using the formal public hearing process required under State and local law.

### **Suggested Action:**

To direct the DPZ team to prepare the second draft of the 2040 Plan, and to include the Planning Board's recommendations for changes as outlined in the letter from DPZ dated April 13, 2021.



March 15, 2021

City Commission Members  
City of Birmingham  
151 Martin St.  
Birmingham, MI 48012

**1st Draft Master Plan Recommendations, March 22, 2021 City Commission Meeting**

Dear City Commission Members,

After a lengthy and detailed review of the Master Plan First Draft, delayed by Covid-19, we have prepared a summary of direction provided by the Planning Board. This was provided to the Board and reviewed on March 10th, with modifications included as specified during that meeting. We hope you are just as eager to see the first draft revised in order to focus on a path towards Birmingham's future. Some items included within the list were shared by City Commission members through joint sessions with the Planning Board in 2019. Quite a long time has been given to a review of the first draft which has received clear feedback and direction by the Planning Board in consideration of their judgement along with public comment.

We provide the information below presented to and modified by the Planning Board, for the consideration of the City Commission in affirming and augmenting the Master Plan Second Draft. As a reminder of process, the second draft will again receive detailed review and modification ahead of the State mandated regional review and adoption process.

Material provided to the Planning Board for review, as modified following that review:

Through the detailed review process of the Master Plan First Draft, the Planning Board provided clear direction on many topics, along with place-specific recommendations. Below is a summary of that direction focused on plan elements that should be modified. Additional direction was provided concerning plan elements that should be prioritized but not necessarily changed. Some of this direction is reflected in the Master Plan Themes that have been refined through this review process. Additional

supportive direction has been focused on connecting across Woodward, recommendations within mixed-use districts, and the use of planning districts to evaluate whether residents are well served with necessities like sidewalks and public amenities like parks. Some place-specific recommendations fall within the broader topics and are not separately specified here.

Over the course of review, many topics were revisited and direction made more clear. For instance, the discussion of Seams evolved from their first appearance during our Premise and Theme-based meetings, to consideration of housing infill in the Triangle District, and finally to the clear recommendation provided in the meeting focused on that topic specifically, recounted below. While the list here is relatively short, each item includes additional background from the conversations over this past year.

In addition to the feedback provided by Planning Board members, the planning team has received approximately 320 individual public comments through the project website and via email. Public input was also collected during the 11 meetings, both of the Planning Board and City Commission. Additional feedback was collected in a survey following the First Draft release, with 310 responses and 142 comments in the open-ended questions. Many of these comments are addressed by the direction of the Planning Board, and have helped influence this direction through public comment at meetings which has mirrored many written comments received. Some comments include place and topic-specific recommendations beyond what can be more broadly addressed, which will be considered for the Master Plan Second Draft as it is prepared.

Some public comment has clearly expressed concern that changes have not yet been made. We are just now completing the initial review to collect input. It has been quite lengthy, but that has also allowed greater detail in review. Once the initial review is complete, the Second Draft will be written, reflecting the input received. The planning team is just as eager to revise the First Draft as the public is in seeing their input shape the plan.

Following is a summary of mostly high-level direction provided by the Planning Board.

**General Direction**

1. The length of the Master Plan should be significantly reduced.
2. The Master Plan should provide clear prioritization of recommendations, including the Themes created during the review process.
3. Language should be as plain as possible, where technical language is required, it should be clearly defined. This extends to terms that can be vague like sustainability.
4. Adjust and clarify the correction to growth projections (2,000 people not 2,000 units).
5. Infrastructure should be addressed. (the details of this request require discussion)
6. Increase the focus on sustainability.
7. Acknowledge Covid-19, including a prologue to ground the document in the current condition. (occurred after the Master Plan First Draft)
8. Focus on the bold moves, like Haynes Square and perhaps more aggressive fixes for Woodward, so the plan is forward-looking.
9. Schools should be more prominently featured in the plan expressing a shared vision between the City and the School District.
10. The senior center proposal should be more prominently featured in the plan.
11. Further address connections to surrounding communities.
12. Include recommendations for new historic districts and strengthening of existing districts.
13. Ensure all considerations for walkability address older adults and people of varying abilities.
14. Growth should be focused in Downtown, the Triangle District, and a small amount in the Rail District.

15. More outdoor gathering spaces are needed in light of Covid-19, including covered outdoor spaces in parks.
16. Increase the focus on connecting across Big Woodward and pedestrian safety.
17. Big Woodward north of Maple should be further investigated for traffic calming, in addition to the portion between 14 and Maple.
18. Retain the reduction of parking regulation complexity, but recommend that it be further studied by committee rather than proposing the solution.
19. More broadly address the Rouge natural area, including bank restoration, removal of invasive species, improving the natural condition, and trail modifications to increase accessibility without detracting from the natural environment.
20. Consider the future of the public golf courses.

**Direction Related to Mixed-use Districts**

1. Generally
  1. Consider more shared streets and pedestrian-only areas, including Worth Park as a potential piazza.
  2. Consider dining decks in light of Covid-19.
  3. EV charging and other similar sustainable strategies should be considered in mixed-use districts.
2. Downtown
  1. Bates Street should be included in recommendations.
  2. Revisit the pilot parking program for downtown housing in light of Covid-19 changing business demand and potential future office space demand.
  3. Retail district standards (redline) should be lightened on side streets.
3. Haynes Square / Triangle District

1. Adams Square should be included in recommendations.
  2. Consider live-work buildings.
  3. Add a pedestrian or vehicular connection from Worth to Bowers.
  4. Address how the abandoned portion of Old Woodward south of Haynes should transfer ownership with concern for the existing property owners with frontage on Old Woodward. Also address the City's ability to vacate property by ordinance.
  5. Focus Missing Middle housing principally in Haynes Square and Adams Square.
  6. Look more closely at the Haynes / Adams traffic situation with respect to the proposed modifications.
4. South Woodward Gateway
1. Study the housing proposals along the South Woodward alleys more closely and consider other effective means of noise buffering.

**Direction Related to Neighborhoods**

1. Revise to define sub-areas of the City as "planning districts" and remove all recommendations related to neighborhood associations.
2. Seams should be significantly reduced in location, intensity, and building types allowed, and be thoughtfully located in the limited areas where they may be appropriate.
3. Accessory Dwelling Units need to be revisited and should be severely limited should they be permitted anywhere.
4. New neighborhood commercial destination locations should be reduced and thoughtfully considered while existing destinations strengthened; include more clarity on the uses that should be permitted.
5. Torry requires more amenities.

6. Include stronger reference to the Unimproved Streets Committee recommendations. (completed after the Master Plan First Draft)
7. Completing sidewalks requires more focus and prioritization, could be handled similarly to the committee on Unimproved Streets.
8. Provide more detail on green infrastructure opportunities.
9. Clarify the neighborhood loop, bicycle boulevards, and protected bike paths by including street sections and greater detail addressing different user types.
10. Clarify the Kenning Park path recommendations concerning both pedestrians and cyclists.
11. Increase aggressiveness of tree preservation and replacement recommendations.
12. Provide more detail on non-financial incentives for renovation of homes over new construction and provide greater ability to add 1st floor master bedrooms. This topic is likely to differ between planning districts.
13. Review lot coverage standards and consider adjustments by lot size.
14. Provide more detail on design controls that may be considered.
15. Remove lot combination areas but review the existing ordinance to provide better direction.

We look forward to a discussion of this direction and to revising the Draft Master Plan; thank you.

Regards,



Matthew Lambert

Cc: Jana Ecker, Planning Director; Bob Gibbs, Gibbs Planning Group; Sarah Traxler, McKenna





April 13, 2021

City Commission Members, Planning Board Members  
City of Birmingham  
151 Martin St.  
Birmingham, MI 48012

**1st Draft Master Plan Recommendations, April 19, 2021 Joint City Commission and Planning Board Meeting**

Dear City Commission and Planning Board Members,

Following-up upon the brief discussion held during the March 22nd City Commission meeting, this memo provides some additional information concerning the Planning Board's recommendations for changes to the Master Plan First Draft. During the March 22nd City Commission meeting, more detail was desired concerning the recommendations of the Planning Board, both explanatory in nature and recounting the degree to which the recommendation reflects primarily Planning Board direction, primarily public direction, or a combination thereof. The explanatory detail provided below remains brief and can be expanded upon by the consultants as necessary during the upcoming joint meeting.

In addition to the expanded details, a general summary of public input received is included as a separate memo from McKenna.

Further detail concerning the high-level direction from the Planning Board follows, retaining the order and numbering of the prior memo for ease of discussion.

**General Direction**

These items are not specifically related to a physical location or area of the city and are therefore considered more general in nature.

1. The length of the Master Plan should be significantly reduced.
  - Source: City Commission, Planning Board, and public comment
  - Detail: This item requires no additional explanatory detail.

2. The Master Plan should provide clear prioritization of recommendations, including the Themes created during the review process.
  - Source: Planning Board direction concerning the Themes. Prioritization as direction came from the City Commission, Planning Board, and public comment, specifically in October of 2019.
  - Detail: Further details concerning the direction is not necessary as it is general and clear. However please note that this was discussed as an original goal for the Second Draft by the consultant when presenting the First Draft in 2019. The consultant considers this a step in the process. The First Draft collects and explains all of the recommendations assembled through the Charrette process, to be accepted, rejected, or augmented. The Second Draft organizes and prioritizes the recommendations and timelines.
3. Language should be as plain as possible, where technical language is required, it should be clearly defined. This extends to terms that can be vague like sustainability.
  - Source: City Commission, Planning Board, and public comment
  - Detail: This item is a distillation of comments from the Commission and Board, as well as public comment. It was not presented as a single recommendation originally, rather this is inferred direction across many comments which has been validated by the Planning Board.
4. Adjust and clarify the correction to growth projections (2,000 people not 2,000 units).
  - Source: Consultant, supported by Planning Board and public comment
  - Detail: During the course of review the consultant identified that the growth projection as stated in the First Draft was incorrect. During Planning Board review, the consultant corrected this information publicly. Some public comment specifically referred to the growth projection numbers. That comment in some instances is related to following items concerning the form and location of growth, and other comments sought clarity.

5. Infrastructure should be addressed (the details of this request require discussion).
  - Source: Public comment
  - Detail: This item was brought up through public comment, specifically relating to stormwater, unimproved streets, and sewer capacity. It is identified as requiring further discussion (clarity) by the consultants. At the beginning of this contract the consultants asked for clarity concerning how infrastructure was to be addressed in the Master Plan. The City Manager at the time stated that infrastructure included only the surface, principally the details of streets, and did not include sub-surface infrastructure.
6. Increase the focus on sustainability.
  - Source: Planning Board principally, with some public comment
  - Detail: This item is general in nature as it appears in a few places within the First Draft, along with in the introduction, and touches on natural areas like the Rouge, on streets and stormwater, on public buildings and grounds, on practices like recycling and composting, and on energy use and pollution. These points are spread-out in the First Draft. Some items like reduction of greenhouse gasses from vehicles were not discussed as they are inherent in the physical form of Birmingham inviting walking, and should be discussed along with other stated items in a collected goal of greater sustainability.
7. Acknowledge Covid-19, including a prologue to ground the document in the current condition (occurred after the Master Plan First Draft).
  - Source: Planning Board principally, with some public comment
  - Detail: Concerning the source, Planning Board members discussed physical attributes and concerns in the city related to Covid-19, social distancing, and workplace dynamics. Initially this was brought up through public comment and revisited more than once by the Planning Board. While the current protocols surrounding Covid-19 are temporary there are a number of real items to discuss going forward. Concerning the disease, while it is expected that Covid-19 can be successfully mitigated, infectious diseases of this type

are anticipated to increase in frequency and severity in the future. A number of other recent diseases like H1N1 in 2009 luckily did not reach pandemic levels, but they have come close. Trends indicate that infectious disease has been steadily on the rise. A number of prior pandemics have led to changes in the built environment, including the Spanish Flu, Cholera, and Plague. The statement to acknowledge Covid-19 comes in part that preparing a 20 year plan without at least acknowledging such a significant event is considered a mistake but also that there are serious considerations which Covid-19 brings to a number of Master Plan recommendations. There is a general consensus that office space demand will be reduced going forward, and a greater demand for spaces to work some of the time within the home. Today's response may be an overreaction, with many tech companies abandoning or significantly reducing office space. However the technology available to work and meet more effectively in a remote manner has become well established in the workplace. Some change is anticipated, which may result in office space that should be converted to housing. In Downtown, this further supports the recommendation to allow residential permit parking in garages. In homes it may mean that definitions of home occupation should be revisited. That is one example of many, including allowances for dining decks, shared streets that provide more pedestrian space, and a demand for more seating opportunities in parks. Most of these items are included within the First Draft to some extent, but warrant revisiting the recommendations in consideration of recent experiences. Luckily Birmingham is a good location to weather Covid-19, and for many of the reasons that Birmingham is a great place to live generally.

8. Focus on the bold moves, like Haynes Square and perhaps more aggressive fixes for Woodward, so the plan is forward-looking.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: This item is both organizational and directing content. From an organizational perspective, a focus on bold moves can garner support. Recommendations can be organized in many ways - by location (as current), by theme, by goal, by department, by change versus stability, etc. Along with the comment on prioritization, this comment is about making the document motivating. The second piece is being more aggressive on some of the key

items, Woodward in particular. For Woodward, some detail was lost in the large document as comments made by the Board were already covered in the First Draft. But Woodward would also benefit from additional crossing improvements and focus on speeds as was discussed extensively. Other areas like Haynes Square are similar.

9. Schools should be more prominently featured in the plan expressing a shared vision between the City and the School District.

- Source: Planning Board principally, with some public comment
- Detail: Schools came up numerous times in discussion. It was recommended that the consultants coordinate with the School District concerning their future plans, including any considerations needed ahead of potential changes, closures, or expansions. Additionally, aspects of the plan had addressed schools with relation to population diversity and housing options, however the schools were a bullet point within those discussions instead of being the other way around. Schools may be better addressed in a goal-oriented organizational format.

10. The senior center proposal should be more prominently featured in the plan.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: The plan included direction to establish a more prominent senior center, as had been discussed at length during the Charrette. As with some other items, this had become a side note to the plan, addressed presently on pages 65 and 66.

11. Further address connections to surrounding communities.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: This item requires no additional explanatory detail.

12. Include recommendations for new historic districts and strengthening of existing districts.

- Source: Planning Board, Historic District Commission, and a few public comments

- Detail: This item requires no additional explanatory detail.
13. Ensure all considerations for walkability address older adults and people of varying abilities.
- Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: Aspects of walkability are discussed throughout the First Draft. While aimed at multiple users, they may not clearly address how multiple users should be considered.
14. Growth should be focused in Downtown, the Triangle District, and a small amount in the Rail District.
- Source: Planning Board and public comment
  - Detail: Aspects of this will re-appear later concerning Seams. This was a growth strategy that was discussed across numerous meetings and in reaction to public comment. The recommendation could be stated in the opposite manner, recommending that growth not be focused within or between neighborhoods.
15. More outdoor gathering spaces are needed in light of Covid-19, including covered outdoor spaces in parks.
- Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: Details surrounding this item were covered previously.
16. Increase the focus on connecting across Big Woodward and pedestrian safety.
- Source: Planning Board, and public comment
  - Detail: This item was addressed above concerning bold moves. It is listed separately as it was a common area of concern and discussion among Board members and the public.
17. Big Woodward north of Maple should be further investigated for traffic calming, in addition to the portion between 14 and Maple.
- Source: Planning Board

- Detail: In Board discussions concerning traffic calming on Big Woodward, the higher-speed condition of Big Woodward north of Maple was identified as a condition that requires specific consideration.
18. Retain the reduction of parking regulation complexity, but recommend that it be further studied by committee rather than proposing the solution.
- Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: The general idea of simplifying on-street parking regulation was supported but the Board believes it should be studied by a committee rather than providing a specific solution within the Master Plan. The Master Plan would retain the problem statement and recommend a committee be established to carry on the work.
19. More broadly address the Rouge natural area, including bank restoration, removal of invasive species, improving the natural condition, and trail modifications to increase accessibility without detracting from the natural environment.
- Source: Planning Board principally, with some public comment
  - Detail: The item is clear but note that the character of the trail is an area of conflict. Some members of the public feel that the trail should remain as it is with wood chips. Other members of the public, and the Board, feel that the trail should be accessible to users of all abilities. The direction as stated is to improve the trail but recommend strategies to limit the impact that such improvements would have to the existing natural character.
20. Consider the future of the public golf courses.
- Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: There is no specific direction to this item. The golf courses were not addressed in the First Draft and the recommendation is to consider their potential to remain as is, to improve, or to be used in some other manner.

## **Direction Related to Mixed-use Districts**

### **1. Generally**

1. Consider more shared streets and pedestrian-only areas, including Worth Park as a potential piazza.
  - Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: The First Draft included some shared streets and the Board recommended that the concept be expanded beyond the areas identified in the First Draft. The recommendation also identifies that Worth Park is an opportunity to provide greater variety in open space types by recommending a plaza instead of a green.
2. Consider dining decks in light of Covid-19.
  - Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: This item was discussed previously.
3. EV charging and other similar sustainable strategies should be considered in mixed-use districts.
  - Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: This item is related to a previous discussion point on increasing the focus on sustainability.

### **2. Downtown**

1. Bates Street should be included in recommendations.
  - Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: At the beginning of the Master Plan process, a proposal for the Bates Street extension was going through public review. As such it was not included in the Master Plan. The recommendation is to include a proposal in the Master Plan since the prior measure was rejected.



2. Revisit the pilot parking program for downtown housing in light of Covid-19 changing business demand and potential future office space demand.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: This item was discussed previously.

3. Retail district standards (redline) should be lightened on side streets.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: The area of very high standards for ground floor uses within Downtown extends to most street frontages. The First Draft recommended that two sets of standards be created, one of higher and one of slightly lower specificity. This recommendation is to expand the slightly lower standards to side streets like Hamilton and Willits.

### 3. Haynes Square / Triangle District

1. Adams Square should be included in recommendations.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: This item requires no additional explanatory detail.

2. Consider live-work buildings.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: Live-work buildings are like a townhome with a small business space on the front. They are typically service uses like attorneys. Live-work buildings are common in historic towns and in some newly built neighborhoods but often not allowed in zoning. The recommendation is to consider where, if anywhere, live-work buildings should be allowed or encouraged. The most likely outcome is consideration for the type within the Triangle District and the Adams Square shopping center, in addition to the Rail District where they are currently allowed.

3. Add a pedestrian or vehicular connection from Worth to Bowers.
  - Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: This item requires no additional explanatory detail, however the consultant strongly supports the recommendation.
4. Address how the abandoned portion of Old Woodward south of Haynes should transfer ownership with concern for the existing property owners with frontage on Old Woodward. Also address the City's ability to vacate property by ordinance.
  - Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: This is a process-related detail of the recommendation to terminate Old Woodward at Haynes in order to improve traffic safety and increase the viability of commercial properties south of Haynes.
5. Focus Missing Middle housing principally in Haynes Square and Adams Square.
  - Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: This is related to allowing more townhomes, duplexes, and small multi-family housing units. The recommendation is to encourage these types of housing in limited areas rather than along most Seams.
6. Look more closely at the Haynes / Adams traffic situation with respect to the proposed modifications.
  - Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: The First Draft recommends that southbound Adams traffic be diverted onto Haynes to meet Big Woodward in order to both improve traffic safety and increase the viability of the Triangle District. The recommendation is to add further detail for this condition to ensure that it is viable from a traffic management standpoint.

4. South Woodward Gateway

1. Study the housing proposals along the South Woodward alleys more closely and consider other effective means of noise buffering.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: The First Draft recommended townhouse-like housing be located along alleys in the South Woodward Gateway area. The alley proposal is aimed at activating alleys which provide a more comfortable means of walking along Big Woodward than the discontinuous sidewalks. Activating the alleys would increase noise which could affect adjacent homes. The First Draft recommended that housing be used to buffer noise as housing is very effective and doing so. These would be located along the alley where houses have previously been removed for additional parking area. The recommendation is to consider options in addition to housing, and to clarify or reconsider the housing recommendation.

**Direction Related to Neighborhoods**

1. Revise to define sub-areas of the City as “planning districts” and remove all recommendations related to neighborhood associations.

- Source: Planning Board and public comment
- Detail: There are two items here. The first is to use the term “planning district” rather than neighborhood to refer to the boundaries identified on Page 30. The second is straightforward, to remove any of the remaining details concerning neighborhood associations.

2. Seams should be significantly reduced in location, intensity, and building types allowed, and be thoughtfully located in the limited areas where they may be appropriate.

- Source: Planning Board and significant public comment
- Detail: The recommendations concerning Seams brought significant public pushback. This began early in the review process but

accelerated towards the end of the process as both information and misinformation about the Seams proposal spread throughout the community. Despite attempts at clarifying the concept, the public reaction was strong and emotional. Throughout the Planning Board review sessions, the subject had come up numerous times and the Board's recommendation was to reduce the intensity of Seams and limit the types of housing allowed within them, targeting growth in the mixed-use areas. Towards the end of the review sessions, public comment increased. While some residents welcomed the recommendation, the majority did not. The Board re-affirmed their prior position and strengthened it. The concept of Seams as presented may be applicable in a few limited locations but the addition of housing type diversity along the edge of most planning districts should not be allowed.

3. Accessory Dwelling Units need to be revisited and should be severely limited should they be permitted anywhere.
  - Source: Planning Board and public comment
  - Detail: Both the Board and public shared concern about accessory dwelling units. Public comment varied from those with specific concerns, such as privacy where existing properties are small, to those with wished to not allow accessory units anywhere. The Board echoed the specific concerns, remaining open to consider conditions that accessory units may be allowed but generally skeptical. The recommendation is to have the consultant consider this input and revise where and to what extent accessory units might be allowed.
4. New neighborhood commercial destination locations should be reduced and thoughtfully considered while existing destinations strengthened; include more clarity on the uses that should be permitted.
  - Source: Planning Board
  - Detail: Neighborhood commercial destinations were proposed in the First Draft in some areas that merit removal, like at Lincoln and

Southfield. The recommendation is to retain the concept and remove some instances mapped in the First Draft. Additionally, the Board would like additional detail concerning the types of uses that should be allowed, and other regulatory considerations.

5. Torry requires more amenities.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: This item requires no additional explanatory detail.

6. Include stronger reference to the Unimproved Streets Committee recommendations (completed after the Master Plan First Draft).

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: The committee work on unimproved streets paralleled the Master Plan process. The First Draft references the committee which has now completed its study and recommendations. The direction is to include this within the Second Draft. While public comment isn't mentioned in the source, the topic of unimproved streets was brought up by the public multiple times.

7. Completing sidewalks requires more focus and prioritization, could be handled similarly to the committee on Unimproved Streets.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: The first draft recommends completing missing sidewalks. The Board feels that it may be lost in other recommendations and wishes to highlight the importance and priority.

8. Provide more detail on green infrastructure opportunities.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: Green infrastructure (bio-swales) was briefly addressed in the First Draft. The recommendation is to include more specificity on green infrastructure in the Second Draft.

9. Clarify the neighborhood loop, bicycle boulevards, and protected bike paths by including street sections and greater detail addressing different user types.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: This item requests further information concerning street design where new approaches and types are included. The neighborhood loop is one instance where the specific implications on street design are not clear to the Board. Some of the other questions come from items in the multi-modal plan that were included in the Master Plan within maps but detailed street sections were not included in the Master Plan.

10. Clarify the Kenning Park path recommendations concerning both pedestrians and cyclists.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: Within the First Draft there is a paved bike path mapped in Kenning Park which was envisioned to be pedestrian and bicycle use but could be read as bicycle only. The Board suggested that it include pedestrian accommodations. This item is a clarification of the First Draft.

11. Increase aggressiveness of tree preservation and replacement recommendations.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: Tree preservation and replacement is briefly addressed in the First Draft. This item recommends that the process be prioritized and accelerated, particularly around preservation in consideration of new construction.

12. Provide more detail on non-financial incentives for renovation of homes over new construction and provide greater ability to add 1st floor master bedrooms. This topic is likely to differ between planning districts.

- Source: Planning Board

- Detail: The First Draft recommends incentives be established to encourage home renovations instead of tear-downs. The Board is concerned that this will be construed as financial incentives and recommends that additional detail be provided concerning potential incentives that are not financial.

13. Review lot coverage standards and consider adjustments by lot size.

- Source: Planning Board and public comment
- Detail: Public comment brought up concerns about drainage in new construction and illuminated a concern about impervious lot coverage. The First Draft doesn't address lot coverage in residential districts aside from a note related to incentives mentioned in the previous item.

14. Provide more detail on design controls that may be considered.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: The First Draft recommends an approvals process for exterior design and materials for homes, along with a discussion suggesting objective and simple design controls that avoid stylistic restrictions. This item requests more information concerning the types of simple design controls referenced. Note that while the source states only the Planning Board that this was also discussed in the October 2019 joint meeting with the City Commission.

15. Remove lot combination areas but review the existing ordinance to provide better direction.

- Source: Planning Board
- Detail: The lot combination areas were a source of confusion initially because they were mapped along with the Seams. These are areas where lot combinations would be allowed rather than relying on the more subjective process in place today. This item recommends that specific areas for lot combinations be removed and that the existing ordinance be reviewed to produce better outcomes.



We look forward to a discussion of this direction and to revising the Draft Master Plan; thank you.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Lambert".

Matthew Lambert

Cc: Jana Ecker, Planning Director; Bob Gibbs, Gibbs Planning Group; Sarah Traxler, McKenna





# Memorandum

**TO:** City of Birmingham, MI and Planning Team, DPZ + Gibbs Planning Group  
**FROM:** Sarah Traxler, AICP  
**SUBJECT:** Public Engagement Summary, June, 2019 through March, 2021  
**DATE:** April 13, 2021

## INTRODUCTION

This public engagement summary concerns the time period since The Birmingham Plan Charrette took place in May of 2019. Between May and October of that year, the consultant team prepared the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of *The Birmingham Plan: A Citywide Master Plan for 2040* and also conducted a three-day “Drop-In Clinic” to accommodate residents and stakeholders who wished to receive additional information post-charrette and to see the direction the 1<sup>st</sup> draft would take. Also during that time period, elected and appointed officials provided additional direction on the 1<sup>st</sup> draft during a joint meeting of the City Commission and Planning Board in June, 2019 and a Planning Board meeting in August, 2019.

Once the 1<sup>st</sup> draft was delivered to the City, a joint meeting of the City Commission and Planning Board was conducted at The Community House in October, 2019. Direction was given to the consultant team and the review of the 1<sup>st</sup> draft was assigned to the Planning Board. Since then, the consultant team has presented to the Planning Board during eight meetings between February, 2020 and March, 2021, receiving detailed and specific direction for how the 1<sup>st</sup> draft should be revised (summarized in great detail in the memo dated April 13, 2021 titled “1<sup>st</sup> Draft Master Plan Recommendations, April 19, 2021 Joint City Commission and Planning Board Meeting”).

Also during the subject time period, the City has frequently solicited feedback from residents in particular on the draft plan, including a set of “Neighborhood Packets” that further described, organized by neighborhood, the plan’s proposals. Solicitations directed folks to the plan website, [thebirminghamplan.com](http://thebirminghamplan.com), as well as provided the option to email, otherwise write to, and/or call the Planning Department.

## THE BIRMINGHAM PLAN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT “BY THE NUMBERS”

To dial back a bit and provide broader public engagement context that spans life of the planning process, we present the following overview – The Birmingham Plan “by the numbers”:

Engagement Method	# of Engagements
Roundtable Discussions	130
One-on-One Interviews	15
Online Surveys	1,252
Charrette	400



Drop-In Clinic	75
Website Comments	275
Emailed Comments	42
Board and Commission Meetings Attendance (11)	455
<b>Total Estimated Number Engagements (April, 2019 – March, 2021)</b>	<b>2,645</b>

## PROJECT WEBSITE

The Birmingham Plan website is another engagement tool, communicating various important concepts related to the process and the plan, including history of the City’s planning efforts, a document repository, and “calls to action” – including the “submit comments” button, which allows folks to write as much or as little as they want and sends their message directly to the consultant team (this is the mechanism by which the 275 website comments noted above were provided).

Since the website was published and promoted in March, 2019, **13,000 unique visitors** have viewed thebirminghamplan.com.

## SUMMARY OF WEBSITE AND EMAILED COMMENTS

The consultant team has received over 310 written comments (through March 5, 2021) from residents and stakeholders during the planning process, though the lion’s share of this substantive feedback has come since the neighborhood packets were issued and publicized in the Fall of 2020. With those comments, we created a “comment log” that is organized by:

1. Date the comment was submitted;
2. Narrative summary of each comment;
3. Tagged by place, if applicable, as follows:
  - a. Central Business District;
  - b. Triangle District (new Haynes Square);
  - c. Woodward Avenue;
  - d. Rail District;
  - e. Specific Places.
4. Tagged by emergent theme, if applicable, as follows:
  - a. Housing policy;
  - b. Neighborhoods;
  - c. Parks
  - d. Seniors;
  - e. Unimproved streets;
  - f. Sustainability;
  - g. Engagement;
  - h. Parking;
  - i. Mobility.
5. And finally, tagged by whether the comment suggests checking the plan for error, addition, or revision.

Thus, below is a brief synopsis of the emergent themes and most frequent topics of comments.



TOPIC	FEEDBACK
<b>Frequent Feedback</b>	
<b>Highest #s of Comments</b> <i>Multi-Family Residential</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 commentors opposed multi-family residential within neighborhoods, including lot combinations to bring about same</li> <li>13 commentors opposed multi-family residential in general</li> <li>Numerous other individual comments that didn't lend themselves to combination were submitted concerning opposition to anything but preservation of the same residential land use patterns as exist today</li> <li>Alternatively, approximately 15 commentors were supportive of more permissive residential land use policy, including missing middle housing proposals, relaxing zoning to support seniors' aging in place, and so on</li> </ul>
<b>Additional High Numbers of Comments</b> <i>Increasing Density</i> <i>Neighborhood Boundary Adjustments</i> <i>Barnum Park Neighborhood Destination</i> <i>Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)</i> <i>Splash Pads + Pool</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 commentors opposed to increased density along the seams, as represented in the future land use plan</li> <li>Nine commentors opposed adding 2,000 residential units (refer to DPZ memo noting error on this specific point in draft 1 of the Master Plan)</li> <li>Eight opposed the proposed neighborhood destination in Barnum Park</li> <li>Eight opposed reapportionment of neighborhood boundaries and plan proposals concerning administration of same</li> <li>Six supported ADUs</li> <li>Five commentors suggested that splash pads be developed at neighborhood parks and/or a community pool be developed</li> </ul>
<b>Comments by Geography (sample)</b>	
<b>Central Business District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjust the plan for Maple at Woodward</li> <li>Limit the height of CBD buildings to avoid "mistakes" like 555 and Birmingham Place</li> <li>Encourage small business success in the downtown</li> <li>Calm streets</li> <li>Etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Triangle District (new Haynes Square)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Haynes Square concept</li> <li>Develop the district to activate Woodward crossings</li> <li>Reconstitute the Corridor Improvement Authority</li> <li>Oppose 6+ stories anywhere east of Woodward</li> <li>Etc.</li> </ul>



<b>Woodward Avenue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce speed limit to 35 MPH</li> <li>• Improve crossing safety and desirability of doing same</li> <li>• Consider bridge across</li> <li>• Maintain 45 MPH speed limit to avoid bottlenecks at gateways</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Rail District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking on both sides of Cole too dangerous, congested</li> <li>• Support acquiring land adjacent to Troy Transit Center</li> </ul>
<b>Specific Places</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments concerning Adams proposals, Adams Square</li> <li>• Comments concerning Lincoln traffic and land uses</li> <li>• Comments concerning Maple</li> <li>• Comments concerning Oak neighborhood plans</li> <li>• Etc. (note that these very place-specific proposals will be gone through one by one to ensure plan is accurate and appropriate at this level of detail)</li> </ul>
<b>Comments by Theme (sample)</b>	
<b>Housing Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See above section, “Frequent Feedback”</li> <li>• Encourage demo / rebuild of older homes to increase tax base</li> <li>• Encourage context-sensitive updates to homes, stronger review of demo and rebuild</li> <li>• Don’t use accommodation of different housing affordability ranges as plan premise</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Neighborhoods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support neighborhood destinations concept</li> <li>• Account for schools, public and private, when assessing needs for new City facilities, including neighborhood destinations</li> <li>• Examine residential stormwater management and bolster codes and inspection for new home development</li> <li>• Support neighborhood and park improvements with sidewalks</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Parks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop pocket park next to Maple Fire Station</li> <li>• Leave Rouge River pathway unpaved</li> <li>• Develop footbridge across Rouge River from Linden to Linn Smith Parks</li> <li>• Acquire property on S. Eton to amplify Kenning Park gateway / entrance</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>



<b>Seniors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider allowing exterior elevators on single-family homes to accommodate seniors aging in place</li><li>• Develop state-of-the-art Senior Center</li><li>• Develop tax breaks for seniors</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul>
<b>Unimproved Streets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lengthen the time from 10 to 15 years on unimproved street assessments to get greater buy-in</li><li>• City take on more financial responsibility for unimproved streets and lead service lines</li></ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preserve trees</li><li>• Eliminate gas fixtures burning gas</li><li>• Include EV charging stations in plan</li><li>• Address climate change with hydrological plan, water resource management</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delay further plan review and discussion until post-pandemic period</li><li>• Plan for 30-40 year olds who don't feel represented by City Boards or other outspoken residents</li><li>• Listen to all, not just wealthier stakeholders</li><li>• Support for residents to vote on plan</li></ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parking focus of charrette report is appropriate</li></ul>
<b>Mobility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus capital improvements for walkability / mobility on items like street trees, sidewalks, rather than neighborhood loop</li><li>• Make Triangle District streets, specifically Elm, safer for pedestrians and bicyclists</li><li>• Support autonomous circulator, add stops along downtown periphery</li><li>• Develop bicycle parking in City garages</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul>

In conclusion, and as noted elsewhere, there was significant consistency between the themes of the feedback the public provided and the specific direction the Planning Board provided for use in revising the 1<sup>st</sup> draft Master Plan. Though a handful of items require clarification, with the additional feedback that is gathered during the April 19, 2021 joint City Commission and Planning Board meeting, the consultant team will be poised to effectively revise the 1<sup>st</sup> draft document.